Interview with Michael Newlin

Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Foreign Affairs Oral History Project

AMBASSADOR MICHAEL NEWLIN

Interviewed by: Thomas Dunnigan

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Q: This is Thomas Dunnigan speaking and the date is October 10, 1997. Today I will be talking with Ambassador Michael Newlin, who spent more than 40 years in the field of foreign affairs in both the Department and at major overseas posts. I'm doing this on behalf of the oral history program of the Foreign Service and of the Association of Diplomatic Studies and Training.

Mike, suppose we begin with your telling me how you became interestein foreign affairs; how you entered the Foreign Service.

NEWLIN: I was born in North Carolina, and during the depression my father was CEO of a very small company that built trains which they managed to sell in Latin America. My earliest remembrances of my father were his taking trips to exotic places like Columbia and Argentina. In 1940, his company was bought out so he wound up working for the Panama Canal Company. We moved to Balboa. That was when I really became interested in foreign affairs. While in high school there, a member of the American Foreign Service came over from the American Embassy, John J. Muccio, who later was Ambassador in Korea in 1950. Muccio's description of what it was like to be an American diplomat caused

me to join the Foreign Service, and that was always my primary interest, my first career goal that I had.

Q: When did you take the Foreign Service examination?

NEWLIN: I took the Foreign Service exam between the years that I was at the Harvard Business School. I went to Harvard Business School in '49 and graduated in '50. I took it in the summer of 1950. Of course, you have to wait quite a while before you hear [the results]. I was fortunate enough to pass. I came to Washington after graduating from the business school in 1951, and, I guess to have something to do while I was waiting for my oral exam, I worked for the Air Force in the Air Targets Division in a temporary building at 12th and Constitution Avenue. I worked there for about nine months until I had my oral exam, I guess in the summer, passed that, and then I entered in September of '52.

Q: You must have been one of the last to enter before the end of thyear.

NEWLIN: We were the last class. It was just on the eve, of course, of the election, the whole McCarthy period and so forth and so on. Our class was the last class to be received by Dean Acheson. It was a great thrill and experience for all of us.

Q: I'm sure. You were assigned to your first post overseas, gather, in Frankfurt, following your training here?

NEWLIN: Yes. I was initially assigned to Munich, which I thought would be very nice, and Cecil Lyon asked if I would come to Berlin. I said yes, I'd be happy to come to Berlin. When I got to Germany, they said Foreign Service assignments in Germany were made by the High Commission and I was going to Frankfurt. I enjoyed working in Frankfurt; it was where I met Milena, my future wife.

Q: But you missed two other desirable posts. Who was the consugeneral at the time of your arrival?

NEWLIN: Chetwynd deRinzy, Montagu Pigott.

Q: Heavens!

NEWLIN: From California, no less. A most delightful, elegant,cultured person. He came from the Commerce Department.

Q: Had you had language training before you went to Germany?

NEWLIN: Yes, I guess we did have a little bit of language training,but most of the language training took place at post.

Q: What were you doing? What was your job?

NEWLIN: The usual thing in those days, you rotated throughout. My first job was Economic Officer and I basically did commercial work, writing reports on German firms. Then I went into the Administrative Section, where I negotiated leases and that kind of thing. Then, finally, I went into the Consular Section doing non-immigrant visas. I found all of it interesting. While I was there, the Justice Department decided that the Nazi Party did not advocate the overthrow of the USG by force whereas the Communist Party did.

Q: Frankfurt in those days was not the Frankfurt of today.

NEWLIN: The center of Frankfurt, except the cathedral, was an open space. Stones of buildings were stacked up in neat piles. I'd go out at noontime and walk around what had been a beautiful neighborhood and it just had neat stacks of stones. But it was beginning to get started.

Q: What were your relations with the U.S. Military, which of course was omni-present in those days?

NEWLIN: Well, this was just at the tail end of the occupation and the High Commission had just, as I arrived, moved from Frankfurt—the former IG Farben HQ [headquarters] to the new quarters in Bonn. But the Consul General was still the Deputy Land Commissioner for the province of Hesse. So technically he was the local representative of the occupying power. But that was beginning to fade. In Consular work, we would issue visas to the Germans and, of course, to the fiancees of American servicemen.

Q: What were your relations with the High Commission in Bonn? Dithey cause you any problems?

NEWLIN: They didn't really. I had to go up there and be interviewed by the security people, but we were pretty autonomous. We had no working relationship with them because I was only a Vice Consul.

Q: By the way, how large was the Consulate General then?

NEWLIN: Fairly large. It was one of the largest. Maybe not the largest, but it was fairly large because we had such a large military presence. They were engaged to German women. We had quite an active immigrant visa program as well as non-immigrant. Commercial relations were going well and there was a great deal of political reporting.

Q: You got a dose of consular work there.

NEWLIN: Yes. Administrative, consular, and a little bit of economics. Consular work in those days was a good initiation. I once interviewed a Santa Claus-type for a visa who swore he was never a Nazi. I had his oath of allegiance to Hitler as a member of the Deathhead SS.

Q: After two years in Frankfurt, you moved to Oslo, Norway.

NEWLIN: Yes. That was normal in those days. They would send you out for two years to your initial post, and then after two years you were transferred. So then out of the blue in December of '54, I got orders saying I was posted to Norway.

Q: What were your duties at the Embassy in Oslo?

NEWLIN: As a Junior Officer, I was initially assigned to the Consular Section. For the first period I was there I did non-immigrant work. Then I was rotated to the Administrative Section. Then, finally, I did political work which was what I wanted to do all along.

Q: What were the duties of a political officer in Oslo in thmid-1950s?

NEWLIN: You did political reporting. My job was editing the WEEKA [e.g., the weekly political summary]. We had to go through newspapers, we met with people in Parliament. There was quite a bit of activity going on. Norway was a NATO member and its neighbor, Sweden, was not. Norway had a common border with the Soviet Union, which made it quite interesting.

Q: Did we have any bilateral problems which you could call problemwith Norway?

NEWLIN: Fortunately, during the time I was there, we did not. Right after I left, we had the U-2 incident, where in Francis Gary Powers' baggage was found a map showing that he had planned to land in Norway. This caused quite a flap. Of course, at Bod#, in north Norway, there was a long airstrip at the end of which was the entrance to an underground hanger. One of the intriguing what ifs, is what would have happened if Eisenhower had made the trip to Moscow that was canceled because of the U-2 incident.

Q: Did you find the Norwegian political parties were open with you; willing to talk?

NEWLIN: Yes. The problem we had to deal with was in Norway's history. The Labor Party was in power—it seemed like forever at that time—and there was an undercurrent of

pacificism, of neutralism there. If it weren't for Halvard Lange, the Foreign Minister, we would have had more difficulty than we did. There was a realization of a genuine threat from the Soviet Union.

Q: Were you there at the time the King died?

NEWLIN: Yes. We were there. There was a great international gathering. At the luncheon at the palace afterwards, our Ambassador, Corrin Strong, was very upset because he was seated next to the Chinese Ambassador [from Taiwan]. He later protested but royal protocol insisted that the seating was dictated by precedence.

Q: What was the effect of the Hungarian crisis in 1956?

NEWLIN: There was a very, very strong reaction. There were demonstrations. And that was unheard of because Norwegians, normally, at that time, did not involve themselves in demonstrations. There was a big, big demonstration in the center of town. They marched down a street and then demonstrated at night, vociferously, in front of the Russian embassy.

Q: And what about the tripartite attack on Egypt in '56? Did thacause strains with the British, French and Israelis?

NEWLIN: Norway condemned the attack on Egypt. I think it was matter of principle. They admired what we did in the Security Council.

Q: In spite of their historic closeness with the British?

NEWLIN: Yes. In spite of that. They felt that the attack waunjustified and it was unprovoked.

Q: I gather you left with a warm feeling for the Norwegians then— the people?

NEWLIN: Yes. They're wonderful. They're wonderful people. I got married during that time in the States that last year. I was there three years. That last year Milena and I had a wonderful time.

Q: After those three years in Oslo, you were moved back to thDepartment.

NEWLIN: Yes.

Q: Into a relationship with an organization that was the beginning of a long association in your career. The UN. As I understand it, you moved into the Bureau of International Organizations [IO], and the heart of it is United Nations Political Affairs [UNP]. Who was the head of the UNP at that time?

NEWLIN: The head of it was Bill Cargo, William I. Cargo. When I arrived, the officer in charge, was Joe Sisco. Sisco then moved up to be the Deputy, so Cargo and Sisco were there during the time that I was there. I remember it well. Cargo and Sisco together. Joe Sisco, of course, went on to much greater things including Undersecretary for Political Affairs.

Q: Had you requested this assignment when you knew you were goinback to the Department?

NEWLIN: I expressed a strong interest in political affairs. Our Ambassador at that time was Frances Willis, the first lady career ambassador. Frances Willis, unknown to me, was trying to pull strings in the Department to get me as the Norwegian Desk Officer. That didn't work, but because she expressed an interest in my future, it wound up that I was sent to UNP. Through the intercession of Joan Clark in Personnel, I became a political officer.

Q: Excellent! I think you were well suited. Now, what was youactual job then? Because, as I recall, it was a rather large office.

NEWLIN: It was a large office. I became sort of a foot soldier in the Cold War because I invented a procedure for not taking any decision on the credentials of the Hungarian delegation. This symbolic action enraged the Soviets and Khrushchev said the procedure was a dead rat in the throat of imperialism. A wonderful compliment.

I then wound up as Officer-in-Charge of Dependent Area Affairs, which I inherited from a great Foreign Service Officer—Francis B. Sayre. As a result of all this, I did make a few contributions. I wrote the speech in which Francis Plimpton, our deputy in New York, said, “The United States abhors apartheid!” That caused quite a sensation in Johannesburg. I also drafted the speech in which we announced, concerning Angola, that governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed. That took a lot of clearing and a lot of opposition from EUR and the NATO desk. But Harlan Cleveland, the Assistant Secretary said, “Well, that's cleared language. I will stand up for that!” (Laughter)

My greatest contribution was that right at the end of my stay, I was asked to join Ellsworth Bunker and another colleague in working on West New Guinea—West Irian. We went to a secret site outside of Washington—a plantation. There were the Dutch and the Indonesian delegations. While we were there, we came to an agreement that provided a face-saving solution to the Dutch for a problem that was left over from Indonesian dependence. It required a great deal of jawboning including the intervention of President Kennedy. Our object was to try to settle it in such a way that it would not too deeply offend the Dutch, but I gather that quite a few of them were offended. Nominally, we Americans were working for UN Secretary General, U. Thant. The Dutch were represented by Ambassador van Royen and Indonesia by Ambassador Malik.

Ambassador van Royen told me of an incident when he was waiting to present his credentials to President Truman in 1950. He was outside the Oval Office with the Chief of Protocol. Van Royen saw a large headline on a tabloid one of the newsmen was reading: “Reds on the Lam.” Van Royen was puzzled and asked the Chief of Protocol if the Lam was a river in Korea. The Chief said he thought it was and made the mistake of asking

the journalist, who looked up and said, “Yes.” When van Royen and the Chief of Protocol were in the Oval Office, the journalist found out their identities from the receptionist and published the story to the State Department's chagrin.

Q: I heard Foreign Minister Luns on the subject. He was not very happy. However, a number of interesting things happened in those years and I'm sure they...in what you were doing. For instance, in 1958, there was a special session of the UN on the Middle East. Did you play any role in that?

NEWLIN: I can't say that I played a substantial role in that. I might have lent a hand in doing some of the work. I was not directly assigned to Middle East affairs at that time. Later to land in it with four paws. I was interested.

There was also beginning in '58, a fight over the seating of thChinese communists.

Q: Was that evident on your radar screen, or not?

NEWLIN: There again, I did not have any direct responsibility for that then. I was later, quite a lot. But not at that time.

Q: I believe Secretary General Hammarskjold wanted to establish a permanent UN Peacekeeping Force. That never got off the ground, I gather, at that stage?

NEWLIN: No. It did not. It was studied, but it did not. One of the advantages of being with the UNP, you could go up to the UN on temporary duty. I happened to be up in New York when Hammarskjold's plane crashed. I remember Sisco was there too. He called a meeting of the Political Section about who was the logical successor. Everybody thought and thought and thought, and said, “Well, it's got to be a third world person.” The consensus was a Burmese like U Thant should be the one, so we recommended that to the Department. The Department rejected the idea because Burma had a common border with China, and we couldn't have anybody as Secretary General from a country like that.

Later on, you know what happened. Did we ever regret that UNP nominated U Thant? I don't think so. Maybe it was a controversial pick, but I think U Thant was pretty good.

Q: Another event of 1958 was our wanting to send UN troops to Lebanon. With the Soviet veto, it never got anywhere, I gather. In 1959, of course, there was the death of John Foster Dulles.

NEWLIN: As I recall, Tom, going back to Lebanon, despite thSecurity Council problem, I think we did send troops to Lebanon.

Q: The U.S. did, didn't we?

NEWLIN: Yes. Not the UN.

Q: Then we're in 1960, with Mr. Khrushchev pounding his shoe in the General Assembly. We could only look on either amused or horrified at that.

NEWLIN: Or both.

Q: Then there was a General Assembly session on disarmament. Diyou get involved in that?

NEWLIN: No. I didn't get involved.

Q: We didn't have an ACDA [Arms Control and Disarmament Agency] athat time, did we? Was disarmament handled only in the Department?

NEWLIN: It was handled in the Department. I think President Kennedy set up ACDA. Then, of course, we placed a travel curb on Mr. Khrushchev so he couldn't move very far from New York.

Another friend of ours was then in New York, that was Fidel Castro. No, Castro didn't speak at that time. It was the Nehru speech. That caused quite an alarm. Mr. Castro moved up to Harlem I gather. He didn't like the hotel in midtown he'd been given.

Q: That's right.

NEWLIN: There was a gathering of world leaders at that time. Probably the last great assembly of world leaders that has ever come together. With Nehru, Nkrumah and all the representatives of the non-aligned.

Q: Were you posted there for duty at that time?

NEWLIN: I happened to be there for part of that. I remember very well going down to the General Assembly and listening to Nehru's speech, but he just droned on and on. It was so boring.

Q: You served in those years when we had three permanent representatives—Senator Lodge, I guess, Mr. Wadsworth, and Governor Stevenson. How would you characterize them?

NEWLIN: Well, Henry Cabot Lodge was the archetypical Boston Brahmin. I got along with him. Everybody who was sent up from the Department had to sort of pass muster. When he arrived, he transferred all the senior Foreign Service personnel except one, and brought in people that he thought were loyal. They were not political, but you had to pass muster. I managed to get along the times when I was up there. Wadsworth, I didn't have many dealings with. I was there for an extended period with Adlai Stevenson and he was a most delightful and intelligent person. Just a pleasure to work for him.

Q: I only met him once, but I would say the same. Was he effectivthough?

NEWLIN: I think he was effective. His effectiveness, of course, was undercut by the dove and hawk characterizations after the Bay of Pigs. That was the most demanding thing that happened while I was there at that time. I remember Joe Sisco saying in the hallway right after it all came out, “Wow! The Democrats have just lost the next election.” I said, “Well, it's quite a while until the next election, and an awful lot can happen in the next two or three years.”

Q: Yes.

NEWLIN: The Democrats did not lose it. LBJ won a tremendous victorin 1964.

Q: What was the effect in IO, UNP, and in USUN by the change iadministrations in 1961, from Eisenhower to Kennedy?

NEWLIN: It was—it mattered. Among other things, we were moving into the new building. We started out in old New State; therefore you had these young, young people—idealists, hard chargers. Harlan Cleveland took charge of IO. I can only say it was very, very stimulating. The President of the United States would call up people. He called up Woody Wallner, who was our Deputy Assistant Secretary. The President gave his news conferences in the State Department Auditorium then. Woody was the nervous type. He's sitting at his desk and the phone rang. He picked it up and somebody said, “Mr. Wallner?” “Yes.” “The President would like to speak to you.” “Mr. Wallner, what was the vote in the Security Council yesterday on Angola?” I was sitting at my desk and I was doing Angola. Somebody rushed down and said “Quick! What was the vote yesterday on Angola?” I said, “Here it is, right here.” He rushed back up. Woody almost died. (Laughter) During a crisis with the Soviets over autobahn access to Berlin Kennedy called up Marty Hillenbrand, Director of German Affairs, and said, “Marty, don't get me into World War III over tailgates.”

All of us in IO were pressed into service during the Cuban Missile Crisis. I witnessed one of the most satisfying examples of completed staff work. While the Security Council was preparing to take up the issue, the OAS [Organization of American States] in Washington was considering a resolution backing the U.S. position. Harlan sent an IO staffer over to monitor the OAS debate. We were all in Harlan's office watching the Security Council when Kennedy called, said the OAS had adopted the resolution and instructing him to get the results to Stevenson in New York. Harlan said, “Mr. President, if you look at the TV you will see Joe Sisco passing a note to Adlai with the vote.”

Q: What was the effect of Dag Hammarskjold's death?

NEWLIN: Well, it was I think unfortunate in a way that Dag Hammarskjold's ability to work cooperatively with the Russians was probably just about at an end because of the Congo. There was no doubt, though, that the UN so far as western support and everything was concerned, lost somebody that was an extraordinary leader.

Q: He had fallen out of favor with the Russians, hadn't he?

NEWLIN: That's right. Because of various things—the Cuban MissilCrisis and other things.

Q: One of the vital problems that came up during your time at the UN, too, was how to pay for peacekeeping. When the French said that they would not pay a cent for UN peacekeeping. The rest of the world would wonder what was happening here.

NEWLIN: Peacekeeping was put, as you know, on a voluntary basis, rather than as part of the regular budget. It was unfortunate, I think that de Gaulle wanted to do that. Of course, the Soviets and the Soviet bloc did not pay also.

Q: Well, speaking of de Gaulle, it turns out that your next post wain Paris.

NEWLIN: Right.

Q: You left UNP in 1963 and moved to USRO. What do those initialstand for?

NEWLIN: United States Mission to Regional Organizations. That was supposed to cover a variety of organizations, but basically it was the U.S. Mission to NATO.

Q: The head of it at that time was Tom Finletter?

NEWLIN: Thomas K. Finletter of the liberal wing of the Democratic Party of Stevenson, Eleanor Roosevelt. A former Secretary of the Air Force and New York lawyer.

Q: Did he take on a strong hands-on approach or did he let his stafrun things?

NEWLIN: Finletter's great goal was the Multilateral Force—the MLF—which was to put strategic nuclear weapons on cargo ships and then to have the Germans and others on board with us. And this was his great—like the ancient mariner preoccupation. (Laughter) As far as the Democratic Party was concerned, LBJ and Finletter were opposites. In one of his first visits to Washington after Kennedy's death Finletter managed to have a small meeting with LBJ at which he made a strong pitch for the multilateral force. Not all concerned agencies were present. LBJ told Finletter to go full steam ahead. As we know, not even a meeting with the President can guarantee the shelf life of a controversial policy. One needs constant broad-based support in Washington which was lacking. In spite of the green light, the administration did not push the MLF project but it was not formally dropped. After Harlan Cleveland angered LBJ over leaking a story on UN finances, he was sent to replace Finletter thereby dooming the MLF. Cleveland's “exile” to NATO was a great boon to the Alliance.

Finletter told a story about a meeting he had with President Truman while he was serving as Secretary of the Air Force. An important policy decision had come up in which there were compelling arguments on both sides. Finletter, the good attorney he was, laid out the pros and cons dispassionately. Truman asked, “What is the right thing to do?” Finletter repeated his presentation after which Truman repeated his question. Cornered, Finletter

then said what he would do if he were President. Truman said, “Always do the right thing; it will please your friends and annoy your enemies.”

Q: What was your position on the NATO delegation?

NEWLIN: I started out as head of the Political/Military unit which had sort of languished because the idea of a Foreign Service Officer working on Political/Military affairs was not popular with the military side of the house. There were three of us in that office, officers more brilliant than I. We worked on the Multilateral Force and we worked on NATO infrastructure, and on the whole series of problems relating to de Gaulle's decision to make the military leave. I did a great deal of work during the time I was there on moving NATO from Paris to Brussels.

Q: What about NATO nuclear forces? We were quite concerned at thtime that the Germans not get their hands on any nuclear weapons.

NEWLIN: Yes. That was the rationale for the MLF—that we blunt any desire on the part of the Germans to develop their own nuclear capabilities. That you associate them getting close to nuclear weapons but keep actual usage in U.S. hands. Also, I was involved in setting up something that has become a permanent thing—the NATO Nuclear Planning Group. That was started while I was there and I was the Group's first secretary. That was an initiative of McNamara. McNamara wanted, among other things, to educate the Europeans as to the realities of nuclear weapons. He used the Group to show what even tactical nuclear weapons would do to the population. I think that was useful. Everybody had to have special clearances. McNamara and other Defense Ministers would come. There were just a few people there. I had to take my turn taking notes. I think that was a useful thing to have done.

Q: What were your relations with the Supreme Allied Commander there,General Lemnitzer at the time, and his staff?

NEWLIN: Finletter was a strong believer in the absolute supremacy of the North Atlantic Council—that you were the personal representative of the head of government and the chief of state and that he should be supreme. When General Norstad, SACEUR, left, he said, “One down, one to go.” The other one was the NATO Secretary General, Stikker. There were no problems really with Lemnitzer other than once we got an instruction that I had to deliver in the middle of the night. The telegram instructed SACEUR to get involved with the Cyprus dispute. Lemnitzer read the instructions and said, “These are the damndest things I've ever seen.” It was where the State Department wanted the Supreme Allied Commander to get involved in one of the intractable problems no one else had been able to solve. Lemnitzer successfully avoided the assignment.

Q: Of course, you probably maintained close relations with thSACEUR political advisor on it, too.

NEWLIN: Yes. That was John Burns. We had very good relations withim.

Q: Some of the political issues that came up at that time was U.S.troop withdrawal from Europe. Did you get involved in that at all?

NEWLIN: Well, certainly the mission as I recall, we strongly adviseagainst anything like that.

Q: Yes. And what about the French nuclear force?

NEWLIN: Well, the French of course, went their own way. There was really very little that we could do. I guess we watched with restrained amusement when critics asked, “Who is your enemy? Why are you building this?” De Gaulle didn't want to say, of course, “I'm building it just out of national pride.” He said, “It will be aimed a tout azimuths.” (Laughter) I said to my French colleagues, “I hope for your sake that you don't accidentally fire one of those things towards the United States!”

Q: Were you involved in the question of the flexible response, whicwas then the big issue in NATO?

NEWLIN: Yes. Very, very much so. In the Political/Military Section we certainly were involved. Rather than massive retaliation, flexible response. Q: That again, played in with what became to McNamara and the new Administration the NATO Nuclear Planning Group. That was a part of that, you didn't just sit back and say, “Well, the American nuclear deterrent will take care of any problems.” There were always wrangles. Difficulties also with the amount of our contribution. Congress said the Europeans are now richer. They ought to pay more. The constant wrangles sometimes... This always involved a forward strategy, too, I gather?

NEWLIN: Well, the MLF died in 1966 or '65, as I recall.

Q: It did. Having been pushing it in Germany, I breathed a sign orelief. (Laughter)

Let's talk a bit about the move to Brussels from Paris. Give us a little bit of background and how did we arrange that? Did we negotiate with the French?

NEWLIN: No. Because there wasn't very much to negotiate. De Gaulle, replaying his tactics during World War II, built up this nationalism against the Western allies. He kicked out the military side. He didn't kick out the North Atlantic Council. That would be kicking out the Ambassadors—all of his allies. Then the question was, well we've just got to pick up and go to Brussels.

Q: The Belgians had invited us?

NEWLIN: Yes. The Belgians invited us, but then the Norwegian Ambassador didn't want to move. He said, “No, no, no. De Gaulle will eventually be leaving.” Turned out he had a beautiful home near the Trocadero. (Laughter) He didn't want to pull up stakes. But at any rate, we pulled up stakes, and it was an amazing feat that in nine months a construction

company in Belgium was able to put up the new headquarters. And in nine months we were ready to move. Of course, we had no adequate place for the Ambassador to live because everybody else had gone up right away and bought up real estate. So by the time we got there everything was gone. We said early on we had to look for a place for the Ambassador to live. FBO said, “There is no firm decision yet and Congress has not appropriated any money.” So we wound up in the DCM's house. Which was alright as a house, but wasn't what you'd expect an Ambassador to own.

Q: Who was our Ambassador who made the move up there?

NEWLIN: Harlan Cleveland. After about a year of the JohnsoAdministration, he replaced Finletter in '65 I believe.

Q: I never thought of Harlan Cleveland as a man devoted to militaraffairs. And here he was, in a sense, in the midst of it.

NEWLIN: Harlan was very creative. He was brilliant. He was ruthless towards the French. He liked to coin a phrase. Just before we moved, we were getting ready to move, he gave a backgrounder in which he referred to “The accelerating irrelevance of France.” (Laughter) He could take a draft telegram on a very complicated subject, such as NATO infrastructure, and say you have to present this in a much broader policy framework so that Washington will understand its importance.

Q: The French took their forces out of NATO at this time, did thenot?

NEWLIN: They did. They pulled out.

Q: To our regret. But they stayed in on the political side, though.

NEWLIN: Yes, they did stay in on the political side. It was difficult to reach a consensus on some things. Gradually we reached a modus vivendi.

The atmosphere when we got to Brussels was entirely different. I used to say in Paris that the year was divided into two six months periods—three months before de Gaulle's semi-annual press conferences, speculating on what he was going to say, the press conference itself, next three months of analyzing what he said, and then it went all over again. That was sort of the political atmosphere. (Laughter) When we got to Brussels, the world went on without de Gaulle. Harlan was right. So we got down to business and you must remember that all during this period, Vietnam was the problem for the United States. We had people come out from the Department and at private lunches they would say, “You've got to remember that every morning the President, the Secretary of State, and the Secretary of Defense wake up and ask themselves, “How do we get out of Vietnam?” McNamara became disillusioned and left. Harlan was fantastic. Clifford was brand new, of course. He'd just gotten into this. At the first meeting of the NATO Defense Ministers that Clifford participated in, Harlan had to take Clifford aside and say, “Here is what U.S. policy is. Here is what the President has stated.” Clifford had his own ideas and his staff was new and all that. Harlan was very effective in presenting American policy and in achieving American goals.

Q: You had a lot of preparatory work to do.

NEWLIN: We did indeed.

Q: What were your relations with the French representative by thtime you reached Brussels? Were they personally friendly?

NEWLIN: Yes. I forget what the French representative's name was at that time, but he was a very sympathetic person. He would go shooting off to Paris every weekend, trying to lobby for something that was reasonable. (Laughter) I remember one feed-back we got was, somebody in the Quai d'Orsay saying, “Oh poor (I forget what his name was), he's like a riderless horse, but his heart's in the right place.”Q: Any other comments about your tour in Paris and Brussels?

NEWLIN: No. It was great satisfaction to see that the move took place and that the Alliance survived. It was a fascinating time to be in Paris and in Brussels.

Q: One final question: was Vietnam ever discussed in the NortAtlantic Council?

NEWLIN: Not formally. It was always there, though. The Perm Reps [Permanent Representatives] used to take turns hosting Ambassadors-only lunches. Vietnam was discussed in these informal meetings. Harlan was quite effective in reassuring his colleagues that, in spite of Vietnam, NATO was still the cornerstone of our foreign policy.

Q: Then in 1968, you were transferred to this country—to New York.

NEWLIN: I went to New York as Political Counselor to the U.S.Mission to the UN. Perm Rep at the time was...

Q: Arthur Goldberg?

NEWLIN: No. Goldberg had left and it was the former editor of the Washington Post. It was Russell Wiggins. He only lasted about four months.

Q: Then did Charley Yost come in?

NEWLIN: Then we had the great good fortune of having one of the top-flight people in the Career Foreign Service [assigned during] a Republican Administration. That was a gesture, I guess, that Nixon wanted to make, sort of bipartisanship. We did have the great advantage of having Charley Yost.

Q: What were some of the big issues you wrestled with now as Political Counselor?

NEWLIN: In those days the UN played a more important part in our foreign policy. We were involved in peacekeeping. We were involved in all sorts of things in the world—the

Arab-Israeli conflict, human rights, there was the annual fight over Chinese representation, Taiwan. There was always something going on.

Q: In 1968, of course, we had the invasion of Czechoslovakia by thSoviet Union. How was that reflected in the United Nations?

NEWLIN: Any criticism of that was vetoed in the Security Council by the Soviet Union. My recollection is that we were able to get, under a condemnation resolution under the Uniting for Peace Procedure in the General Assembly. I'm not quite sure about that because I was not actually in New York when that went on.

Q: Did you take part in the 46th Commemorative Celebration for thUN?

NEWLIN: No. They had quite a big turnout for that. In the WorlYouth Assembly, which also took place there,

Q: Sort of a large jamboree, I gather?

NEWLIN: That's when I came back.

Q: During this time, we began to ease up on the China question, as I recall. The first tangible evidence was the visit of the Chinese ping pong team.

NEWLIN: Yes, there began to be indications that we were. Of course by that time Charley Yost had departed. In 1970, George Bush arrived. It was his first time in national politics as well as diplomacy. He was closer to the White House, I would say, than he was to the State Department. He was very conscientious about following his instructions and he was diligent in doing his homework.

The first big thing that happened was the Chinese ping pong visit to the U.S. George Bush invited them to play ping pong at the U.S. Mission. The newspapers all carried pictures of him and the team. George may have been the senior U.S. official to meet with them.

Q: Paddle in hand! What was his relationship, by the way, witHenry Kissinger, who was then in the White House?

NEWLIN: Well, like anyone else's, I guess. Henry told him in strict confidence on the eve of the vote on Chinese representation, a very critical movement, that he was going to make the trip to Beijing. George told me in strict confidence that he was going to make the trip to China. I guess I was the only one he told; maybe he told others, I just don't know. So I told him, I said, “Well, we will lose the vote, but nobody can blame you.” He said, “No, no. We've got the vote.” The awkward thing was that Rogers and the State Department did not know about the trip.

Q: That is to maintain the Taiwan seat?

NEWLIN: Yes. We changed to what amounted to a two China policy. We supported Beijing as the representative of China but linked this to continued representation for Taiwan. I said, “The waiverers, whenever this gets out, when the pictures come out of Henry meeting with Mao and Zhou En-lai, when push comes to shove, we will lose.” But we still maintained our full court press. It was one of the most dramatic things I was ever involved in. Two days before the vote I asked our experts at the Mission to estimate what the final tally would be (they did not know about the trip). Instead of a narrow victory, they projected a seven or eight vote loss. I persuaded George to send it to the Department in a Top Secret message so that they could be prepared. He was reluctant because he did not want to appear defeatist, but he was persuaded.

Q: I was overseas at the time and I remember how surprised we were at the embassy to get that news and how our host looked at us. (Laughter)

NEWLIN: We also had the second India/Pakistan war. Bhutto was a great actor. Before the Security Council voted on the resolution which recognized the cease fire and

Bangladesh, Bhutto tore the resolution up and threw it into the hollow of the round table and walked out. Later I saw him walking arm in arm with the Indian Foreign Minister.

India overwhelmed the Pakistanis in what is now Bangladesh and then invaded present day Pakistan. The President of Pakistan indicated to us that he would accept a cease-fire. The Department instructed Bush to urge the UN to call for one. I was on the phone when George called U Thant but he declined in spite of our pleas that UN action would save lives. When Pakistan's military situation became desperate, Pakistan again indicated it would like a cease-fire. The Department then demanded that Pakistan formally request us to seek one. In the middle of the night we got the request and delivered it to the Indian Mission in New York.

Q: Therefore we have Bangladesh now in the UN. Now, during that time there were shots fired at the Soviet Mission in New York. Did that make any new problems?

NEWLIN: Yes, indeed, it did. It was alleged that these were members of Rabbi Kahane's Jewish Defense League and George Bush was magnificent. In the evening, when that happened, he got in his car and he and the Political Officer who spoke Russian, went over to the Mission and met the families whose children were asleep in the room where the bullets hit. George Bush, without instructions, met with the media and strongly denounced this terrorist attack. When Rabbi Kahane, who was at the press conference, tried to justify the attack, George Bush denounced him strongly.

Q: They never picked anyone up or prosecuted anyone, unfortunately? The very next time that one of our delegates, Congressman Diggs, resigned, did that cause a plus or a minus?

NEWLIN: A plus.

Q: I had met Congressman Diggs and I think a minus. (Laughter)That's the way to play it.

NEWLIN: Yes.

Q: Also during that time, Kurt Waldheim was nominated SecretarGeneral.

NEWLIN: Oh, yes.

Q: Say a little about Waldheim and how he got to be electeSecretary General.

NEWLIN: Well, our candidate was Jacobson of Finland. He was indeed highly qualified. I think he was seen by the Russians and some others as possibly another Hammarskjold. Jacobson was a very good professional diplomat. Highly respected. Secretary of State Rogers told him that, “You are our candidate and you're going to be the next Secretary General. We will veto all other candidates until you are elected.” At any rate, Jacobson conducted his campaign—he would always come and report to us. “Yes, I've talked to the French, I've talked to the British, and they have no objection to my candidacy.” The Western powers never said, “You are our candidate,” they always said, “We have no objection to your candidacy.” In the crunch, they were not as strong for Jacobson as we were and were quite comfortable with Waldheim.

Q: Excuse me, Mike, was there a third world candidate at all?

NEWLIN: There were other candidates. Ortiz de la Rosas of Argentina was a very capable diplomat. A certain number of Latin Americans were for him. He would also have been a fine Secretary General and George Bush liked him. But we kept supporting Jacobson. I would say to him, “What about the Soviet Union?” He said, “You don't understand. The Soviet Union cannot veto a Finn.” It didn't necessarily mean they would vote for him. It was clear after a while that Jacobson was going to be vetoed. So there was no alternative to Waldheim because the Europeans were behind him.

Q: We needed another candidate.

NEWLIN: Yes. Even the people who said they had no objections to Jacobson rallied behind Waldheim. So we investigated and he got a clean bill of health and everything and no allegations of any improprieties. On the first ballot, we did cast our veto, and on the second secret ballot we did as well. When the third ballot came, Rogers, then our Secretary of State, and the British ForeigMinister were meeting in Bermuda and they agreed that we should support Waldheim. The French, in particular, were happy with the decision. The Norwegians assured us that China [Beijing by 1972 session] would veto Waldheim until the end but when it was clear that he had near-unanimous support, they too caved.

Q: Had we known his background, I mean.

NEWLIN: We had investigated everything and he was as clean as a hound's tooth. Yes, he was in the German Army during the war, but he was wounded by the Russians, and he went back to Vienna and practiced law. All of that was known.

Q: The rest is history. The Israelis...

NEWLIN: The Israelis, if they knew something, didn't say anything. The Yugoslavs, if they knew, didn't say anything. In retrospect, I think he covered up his service in the Balkans so successfully, that the legal practice after he was wounded was believed.

Q: In 1972, we began to reduce our contributions to the UniteNations.

NEWLIN: Yes, we did.

Q: That caused you problems, no doubt?

NEWLIN: It did.

Q: Was that done under Congressional pressure or did thAdministration decide?

NEWLIN: Congressional pressure had a lot to do with it. I think the Department, at that time, did not favor a unilateral decision to ignore our legal obligation. Attitudes toward the UN began to change. There were many third world and Soviet Bloc speeches against the Vietnam War.

Q: In 1972, your tour of the United Nations came to an end. And you moved then to Africa, Kinshasa, as DCM. Was this a post you sought, or how did this come about?

NEWLIN: While I was there, 1972 I guess, the Security Council met for the first and only time outside of New York. George Bush was our representative and so a small group of us went to Addis Ababa for the meeting. While there, I accompanied him on a side trip to Somalia along with other Council members. Bush persuaded the White House to let him have a plane for a goodwill tour of Africa. He was the highest ranking U.S. official at that time ever to visit Africa. We went to Sudan, Kenya, Zambia, Zaire, Ivory Coast and Chad. We were warmly received and Bush made a very favorable impression at each stop.
In Kinshasa, I was impressed with Zaire—a vast country with many natural resources. Although I had never served in Africa at USUN I had worked on African problems—negotiations on the independence of Rwanda and Burundi, Angola, apartheid. When it was suggested that I put my hat in the ring to succeed the departing DCM, I did. George Bush told the Ambassador, Sheldon Vance, that he thought I'd be a good DCM, and so that's how I got that job.

Q: How large an embassy did you have?

NEWLIN: Pretty big. It was a big operation. Very big. I guess, in total we had some 400 employees when you consider all the contracts that we had. A big AID mission as well as a Defense Attache. When I arrived, we even had a military plane to take us around to the constituent posts.

Q: Yes, I was going to ask you about those.

NEWLIN: We had three consulates. The most important was Lubumbashi in Shaba, the copper mining region. Another was in Kisangani, in the middle of the country and one in Bukavu, not far from Rwanda and Burundi.

Q: Were the Peace Corps asked to volunteer in the country?

NEWLIN: Yes, we did have the Peace Corps. Our first contingent was held hostage in Uganda by Idi Amin for several days when their plane stopped to refuel. It is hard to assess the benefit of AID and Peace Corps operations in a country like Zaire.

Q: How did you and the Ambassador divide the work?

NEWLIN: The Ambassador looked to me to coordinate the day-to-day work of the embassy. We worked very closely together. He would take responsibility for meeting with Mobutu or the Foreign Minister. He thought I should be aware of everything that was going on. He made that clear. He said, “If I'm ever gone, you should be in charge, and there will be no second guessing when I come back.” I did the day-to-day work of coordinating all the various sections, and they reported through me to the Ambassador. He then exercised sort of overall oversight. While he was on home leave I took part in the negotiations on the at that time the largest EX-IM loan—$700 million to build a transmission line from the Congo River to Shaba, several hundred miles.

Q: I call that the ideal relationship between an ambassador and DCM.

NEWLIN: That's the way it should be.

Q: Did it work that way with Dean Hinton?

NEWLIN: No. It did not work that way with Dean Hinton.

Q: Quite a different individual.

NEWLIN: Quite a different individual.

Q: He was on top of everything, as I recall.

NEWLIN: Yes. And certainly not telling his DCM everything he waabout to do.

Q: What were some of the problems we had in Zaire, or did we havmajor problems?

NEWLIN: We had major problems at the time. You've got to remember this period was during the Cold War. I think there was a tendency to turn a blind eye as to what was really the reality. Sheldon Vance certainly was a decent, God-fearing, upright person. Yet we didn't at that time really dig into what was, in effect, going on. All of the shipping out of the gold and the diamonds to Switzerland. There was no investment in the country by Mobutu and his rich relatives and cronies. They were skimming off everything. I think we could be criticized for that. Sheldon occasionally informed Mobutu of egregious malfeasance but Mobutu was almost certainly aware of such cases and probably profiting. The rationale was that Mobutu's support was an important African leader who generally supported United States policy. He was genuinely anti-Communist.

Q: When others weren't. But certainly the CIA people must havknown what was going out if they were worth their salt.

NEWLIN: Oh, yes. Things were somewhat complicated by the fact that one of the CIA Africa hands who helped bring Mobutu to power came back to Kinshasa as a representative of Tempelsman on a huge new copper mine project.

Q: What were your impressions of Mobutu as a leader and as aindividual?

NEWLIN: Extremely capable leader. Brilliant. Charismatic. I've been at a sports arena where he could galvanize the people. At the same time, he was certainly robbing the country blind. He and his ministers.

Q: During that time there were Americans involved in a plot against Mobutu, at least that was the story. Did that cause the Embassy any problems?

NEWLIN: I don't remember that happening while we were there.

Q: Obviously then, it didn't cause any big problems.

NEWLIN: No, it did not.

Q: What about the break in relations with Israel?

NEWLIN: That did cause some problems because I was there at that time, and we had had indications that he was signaling that he was going to choose at the UN between a brother and a friend. The choice was obvious.

Q: Presumably, we tried to dissuade him.

NEWLIN: We did, in New York, Bill Schaufele was sent to warn Mobutthat there would be repercussions.

Q: How strong was the Belgian influence there?

NEWLIN: Strong. The Belgians were certainly there. They were involved in administrative and technical positions. For example, in the national bank.

Q: Were they resented by the Zaireans?

NEWLIN: I don't think so. I think the average, everyday Zairean was easy going. It was during this period that various foreign business interests were taken over by the Zairean.

Q: Did that cause headaches for our Embassy?

NEWLIN: No. Not really. I think the administration remaineBelgian.

Q: One of the great events of that period was the MohammeAli-George Forman fight.

NEWLIN: We were there and it was everything it was cracked up tbe—one of the great shows of the century.

Q: Now, at one period our Ambassador, Dean Hinton, was PNGed. Hodid that come about?

NEWLIN: Dean replaced Vance during my third year. I'm very fond of Dean—and he is certainly an extremely bright individual. But Dean was not suited to be Ambassador to Central Africa. From the very beginning, the chemistry between Dean and Mobutu was not good. Dean did do things—he didn't ask my advice and called for his Lincoln Continental and went off into what they called the cit#...where the Zaireans lived and called on the Cardinal—Cardinal Malva, who was the political opponent of Mobutu. Jeune Afrique had an article called “Our Man in Kinshasa.” The implication was that Dean wanted to oust Mobutu. When that came out, Dean said, “That's nothing. We don't have to report that.” I said, “Oh yes, we do!” (Laughter) We found out through intelligence sources that the head of the Central Bank, a Mobutu crony, planned to send the bank's silver deposits to a store front someplace in the U.S. Dean warned Mobutu that this was about to happen. Of course, this was all part of a Mobutu operation although he professed to be shocked. He said, “The head of the Central Bank will explain this to you.” Of course, he never got around to it.

My tour was up and I left on home leave. I was in North Carolina and my sister gave me the morning paper. She said, “Oh, it looks like the Ambassador to Zaire has been declared Persona Non Grata!” (Laughter) Dean escaped Kinshasa and went on to greater things in Nicaragua and Panama.

Q: Were you there when Sheldon Vance came back on his mission?

NEWLIN: No. Sheldon was sent back for a while to repair relations.

Q: Were we aware of some of the military things that were going othere—the support for rebels in Angola?

NEWLIN: Oh, yes. Dean was particularly peachy keen for that. (Laughter) He urged Washington to make the AID director, who spoke Portuguese, a generalissimo to coordinate military assistance to Savimbi in Angola. The Political Counselor and I opposed the idea and Dean was big enough to include our opposition in his telegram. The AID director was not consulted but he would have been appalled.

Q: Were you able to travel around in Zaire?

NEWLIN: Yes. I visited the entire country and was overwhelmed by its beauty and potential. Bukavu is like Switzerland—now devastated by fighting and hoards of refugees.

Q: Went north and south. You've been there, haven't you? When you left, did you have the impression that Zaire was going to make it, or that it was on the slippery road down?

NEWLIN: Things were not as bad when we were there. The people were certainly poor, but they had enough manioc to eat. Mobutu gave them a sense of pride and everything. They were running their own affairs. It was worrying that they had a dictatorship—a sort of benign one, but it was a dictatorship. We had no real evidence of serious human rights abuses at that time, and there was no effective political opposition, so I sort of expected that things would perk along pretty much for an indefinite period, which I guess they did.

Q: If I read history correctly, or modern history, it took a push from the outside to throw Mobutu out.

NEWLIN: Yes. Mobutu made a mistake of trying to get rid of the Tutsis in eastern Zaire. I guess it was really the Rwandans and Uganda that overthrew him, with the help of the Tutsis and some others.

Q: So it was Rwanda and Uganda?

NEWLIN: Yes. In the Bush administration when Mobutu steadfastly refused our urging to implement reforms, the U.S. suggested he step down. He hung on until cancer and the unwillingness of the Army to fight for him caused him to flee.

Q: Well, your tour in Kinshasa ended in 1975. You came to Jerusalewhere we had the pleasure of getting together at that time.

NEWLIN: Yes.

Q: Was this an assignment you had requested?

NEWLIN: It came out of the blue. My three years were up and I was ready to leave. I was called up by Roy Atherton. He said, “Mike, we'd like you to go to Jerusalem as Consul General.” I said, “Yes, indeed. I will go.” I was thrilled. Three days Roy called and said the DCM was leaving and would I come as the DCM? I discussed the situation with my wife and we decided that we would rather be in Jerusalem where I would, in effect, be chief of my own mission, rather than be DCM in Tel Aviv even though I was flattered by the offer.

Q: So you went to Jerusalem in what is always an interesting, but controversial post, with the Israeli government fairly well entrenched in Jerusalem and yet surrounded by the masses of Arabs. It was a challenging assignment. Did you have a large staff?

NEWLIN: No. The staff was quite small. Certainly on the political side, we had just myself and the Deputy Consul General, and one Political Officer. We had a fairly large Consular operation, issuing visas and passports.

Q: You were divided into two offices?

NEWLIN: Yes, we were. The Consulate General is located in an Israeli neighborhood even though the building is an old Arab one. The Consular operation was over on Nablus Road, over on the other side of town, on what was then known as the Arab side. These terms, of course, were rejected by the Palestinians and the Israelis, but this reflected the composition of the neighborhoods.

Q: What were your relations with the Embassy?

NEWLIN: It depended with whom you talked. I managed to, I think, get along reasonably well with Mac Toon, a difficult and opinionated individual, who had his own problems I guess while he was Ambassador to Israel. In my first interview with him in Washington before I went out, he made it quite clear that he didn't agree that the Consulate General should be an independent post; it should be a constituent post. I pointed out that this policy went back to the founding of Israel. The status of Jerusalem should be determined at the ultimate peace negotiations. He tried his best to get Jerusalem under him, but it didn't work. But we got along very well. I will say for the record that thanks to DCM Tom Dunnigan, we had very, very good relations not only with Tom, but with Blackwill, the Political Counselor. I think we worked albeit independently but in a coordinated effort to achieve U.S. objectives in the area.

Q: Thank you very much for the commercial, but it's true, Mike. know we had good relations there.

NEWLIN: That was thanks to people like you and Blackwill and the others. We always welcomed people to come up and meet with us at the Consulate General and whenever I was invited, I always went down to the Embassy. Historically, this was not always the case. There were times when the Ambassador and the Consulate General didn't even

speak. I did not feel that that was the kind of relationship one should have at Foreign Service posts.

Q: No. And I will say one thing for Mac Toon, my Ambassador. Htreated everyone the same. (Laughter)

NEWLIN: And, bless his heart, he is alleged to have taken an initiative without mentioning it to me, and for getting a Presidential letter from Carter telling the Israelis to stop settlements to help peace prospects. It was all secret. He handed it over to Rabin and Rabin said, “I can't accept this. The government would fall.” (Laughter) So he took the letter back. This shows that his heart was in the right place.

Q: Yes. Absolutely. It always was. Now, what were your relationwith the Israelis?

NEWLIN: Minimal. I had Israeli friends, of course, from my years in New York, where we worked very, very closely with the Israelis on anything to deal with the Middle East. Tekoah, Eppie Evron, Cahana and some of the others. My commission as Consul General to Jerusalem was signed by Kissinger. The Department noted there was no chief of state to present it to for an exequatur. If anyone, it would have been to Teddy Kolleck, the Mayor, who was a wonderful, wonderful person. I had very good relations with him and his staff. Always the inevitable problems would come up. We always managed to find a solution. I wound up being a guide for high ranking officials who naturally wanted to visit the sites in the Old City. Such visitors were supposed to go under my auspices rather than Israeli.

Q: Several of the Israeli officials mentioned to me that they woullike to see the Consulate General closed.

NEWLIN: Sure. Sure.

Q: I tried to point out that we were going to keep it open. They never pushed very hard. Finally, what were your relations with the Palestinians?

NEWLIN: We were really on the political side, accredited to the Palestinians in Jerusalem and the Left Bank. Due to an historic anomaly, we were not accredited to Gaza. It would have made sense to have us accredited there as well, though I had a very good relationship with the Gaza leaders. Of course, during this time no American officials were permitted to have contacts with the PLO. While a majority of the Palestinians supported the PLO, none admitted to PLO membership since if they did, they would be deported or jailed.

I arrived in Jerusalem a year after there had been probably the only free and fair elections held in the Arab world in the Left Bank. The Israelis let this go forward and they respected the results. Therefore, I had an elected leadership in the Mayors of all the towns. They were all very, very capable, moderate people. They were trying to do their best under very difficult circumstances of Israeli military occupation and the inevitable problems of trying to rule a large population—a young population. I made regular visits to the West Bank mayors and other notables; sometimes I met at their offices and sometimes met in their homes. I did most of my political reporting that way.

Q: Could you intervene with the Arabs?

NEWLIN: Yes. Some of the Arabs in East Jerusalem would not come to the Consulate General, but I would have a chance to meet with them. This all changed, of course, after Camp David, when they would come. Not only the West Bank mayors but the Gaza leaders too.

Q: You were there, of course. You were in Jerusalem at the time oCamp David. And also during Sadat's visit.

NEWLIN: We were there for Sadat's visit. It was one of the great experiences of my Foreign Service career. Indisputably an historic event.

Q: Would you like to say a word or two about that?

NEWLIN: The Consulate General played a minor role. We provided secretarial and other assistance to the Egyptian delegation right around the corner at the King David Hotel. We typed the English version of Sadat's speech for the Knesset. I took my daughter, who was a teenager at that time, over to the King David Hotel. I said, “In a few minutes, through that door will walk the President of Egypt and the Prime Minister of Israel. (I went on and on.) You'll want to remember this.”

Q: An historic first.

NEWLIN: An historic first.

Q: What was the effect on the Consulate General of the Camp Daviagreements?

NEWLIN: I was called up by Dick Viets, who was then the DCM in Tel Aviv. He said, “Go turn on your television set, Mike, early in the morning. You will see a broadcast from the East Wing.” When I heard this, I thought it was too good to be true. When Jimmy Carter said, in effect, that during the negotiations for the final status, there will be a moratorium on settlements, I said, “This is really something. This is more than just a peace agreement between Israel and Egypt. It is laying the foundation for a permanent Arab-Israeli peace.” Carter repeated his statement on settlements the next day in his statement to Congress. In New York, two days later Begin held a backgrounder for Israeli journalists, he was asked about this. Begin said, “Do you think that I, a member of the Likud, would ever agree to a freeze on settlements?”

I immediately called up Dick Viets in Tel Aviv. He had noted the contradictory statements and said he would ask Moshe Dyan, the Foreign Minister, about this when he met

him at the airport on his return from New York. Dyan told Viets that there was some misunderstanding and that he would sort it out when Begin returned a few days later. Of course, that never happened and Camp David became a bilateral peace which resulted in Israeli withdrawal from Sinai.

At any rate, I didn't wait for instructions from Washington. I got in a car and I went off on my West Bank rounds, telling the Palestinian leaders and mayors and notables that, “This is your chance. If you want to bring about an end to occupation, you will accept it.” They all got a little cagey and said you'd have to bring the PLO in, what would Arafat say, and were we consulting Arafat? We weren't. But I made a strong pitch for them seizing the opportunity for negotiations offered by the Camp David agreement.

Q: Those were exciting periods, weren't they? Were you inundatefrom visitors from State, Congressmen?

NEWLIN: Oh, yes. That was one of the byproducts. We had the sitting President, Jimmy Carter, was there once. We had former President Ford, we had Senators so, as I say, after Camp David we made a strong pitch. This was followed up by high-level people from the Department such as Hal Saunders coming out and meeting with the Palestinians, people from Gaza would come to the Consul General as well as people from the West Bank and we made a very hard sell, saying, “This is your chance to start getting rid of the occupation or ameliorating the situation now. Are you going to take this, or do we go back and tell the President that you're not?” They would take evasive action, basically because the PLO —Arafat—were not involved and they didn't feel they could do this on their own. It was asking really too much of them to take this on since they were under Israeli occupation. It was unfortunate. It was particularly unfortunate that the understanding that Carter tried to impose of a freeze in settlements did not succeed. Settlements remain a major hurdle. It was still a major achievement...firmed up peace between Egypt and Israel, and things of that nature.

Q: What do you feel about the question of moving our Embassy froTel Aviv to Jerusalem?

NEWLIN: I think that shouldn't be done until we have, in effect, an overall peace agreement. Congress, for political reasons, keeps opposing that. I hope the Administration...That's just one other erosion of our position.

Q: Finally, do you feel that your policy input had any effect iWashington?

NEWLIN: Yes. I remember sending off a telegram once concerning the West Bank and at the end where you could have a comment, I fudged in making the comment by also making a policy suggestion—a relatively minor one—but a policy suggestion. I remember about two days later I was called up, and David Korn said, “Your suggestion has been approved.” I said, “What? What?” They said, “Yes, your telegram came out of the Oval Office. In the margin of the comment was, 'Okay. JC.” I said, “You don't mean to tell me that the President reads telegrams from Jerusalem?” They said, “He reads most of the telegrams you send.” (Laughter)

I am happy that the potential of the Consul General has now been realized. Ed Abington has played an active role in reviving the peace process and has shuttled between Jerusalem and Gaza conveying our views to Arafat.

Q: Well! Congratulations! (Laughter) Now that we've reached that high a level, we're going to move you. After five years in Jerusalem, you came back to Washington—the Department of International Organizations, where you became Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary. That is a result of having conducted Bill Maynes, the Assistant Secretary, on a tour of Jerusalem.

NEWLIN: Yes. When Bill got back, I think Roger Kirk was leaving,and he asked me to come back to IO.

Q: It was an area in which you had a great deal of experience. You could land running, in a sense. What happened in the change of Administration that year, from Carter to Reagan, as concerned our policy in International Organizations?

NEWLIN: Certainly, it was downgraded. The new Administration made it clear that they had entirely different objectives and agenda. Things like the UN and the underdeveloped world and that type of thing were not very high on the agenda. For example, Reagan at the outset basked in the release of the Tehran hostages yet the administration went out of its way to make clear that it was not grateful for all the help Algeria gave in the negotiations leading to their release.

Q: Who became Assistant Secretary in the Reagan Administration?

NEWLIN: Elliot Abrams.

Q: Elliot Abrams! We later met when he was in charge of human rights. What were your principal concerns? You had, of course, to guide Elliot Abrams as he took over, I presume?

NEWLIN: I did. I got along, I thought, well with Elliot. I think I assisted him— explaining how the Bureau worked and briefing him on issues. Of course, we had Jeane Kirkpatrick in New York. He let me know after a few months that the Administration felt the senior people —holdovers from the old Administration—should depart. After about three or four months, I left.

Q: They wanted a house cleaning, in other words?

NEWLIN: Yes. They wanted people they knew. One of the first things they did was to fire Hal Saunders, who played a key role in the Camp David agreement, and this was repeated in all other bureaus.

Q: Were there any major problems of substance that you had to handlin your tenure there?

NEWLIN: One major one that in retrospect, I guess, was not handled as well as it should have been, was the famous vote in the UN. Don McHenry was our representative at the UN in the latter months of the Carter administration after Andy Young had been fired for meeting secretly with the PLO. Bill Maynes was out of town and so was Hal Saunders in NEA out of town. So it was Mike Sterner and I who picked up on a comment coming out of Tel Aviv that somebody—not at the senior level but in the Foreign Ministry—indicated that they were rather relaxed about language in a Security Council resolution that would, in effect, call for a moratorium on settlements. So Mike Sterner and I persuaded Secretary Vance to go along with what McHenry was lobbying for, to get the White House to go along with this. And so we did. Then there was a big snowfall in Jerusalem. As soon as Begin and the Israeli government woke up to the fact that the United States had voted for the resolution all hell broke loose. Carter then called in the Secretary of State, Vice President Mondale and other advisors, and Secretary Vance took responsibility for the failure to communicate Carter's true intentions to McHenry. Of course, Vance had cleared the vote with the White House but like the good soldier he was, he took the blame in order to calm things. It was during the electoral campaign. It must have been prior to the vote, so Vance took full responsibility for it. We shouldn't have done something that caused problems. Of course, voters in New York City were outraged. We had to back off from that.

Q: Shamefully, I would say, but that's an editorial comment.

NEWLIN: Let's say this. I think the policy was the right one, but think the enunciation of it could have come at a more opportune time.

Q: What about the problem with Iran? Did that arise while you werthere?

NEWLIN: Yes. We were deeply involved in monitoring the peace negotiations. And what was going on in Algiers. We helped coordinate what was going on at the UN with the agreements that Christopher and the Algerians reached with Khomeini.

Q: And Afghanistan?

NEWLIN: Afghanistan as well.

Q: There was an assassination of a Cuban at the UN at this time.Did this cause you any great problems?

NEWLIN: Well, the usual thing, but no, it was just unfortunate.

Q: Yes. The Cuban was done in by exiles?

NEWLIN: Presumably.

Q: Mr. Shevchenko said that the UN Secretariat was penetrated by Soviet Intelligence. We knew that beforehand, so it was not a great revelation. (Laughter) What were your relations with the geographic bureaus in the Department?

NEWLIN: I would say very good. It depended on the issue before the UN. We worked closely with NEA on the hostages and with AF and EUR on colonial matters.

Near the end of the Carter administration I had an interesting experience while serving as Acting Assistant Secretary of IO (Bill Maynes resigned before the election). Muskie replaced Vance and I was summoned to Dobrynin's first call on the new Secretary to take notes. Dobrynin came alone, spoke perfect American English, and showed photos he had taken on a recent drive to the West Coast. He told a story of a Sunday gathering at Stalin's dacha. Each person had a small bottle of vodka on a little table beside each chair. When Stalin got up and went to another part of the room, one of the guests poured himself from Stalin's bottle while the latter's back was turned. On returning, Stalin asked the person,

“How do you like my vodka? It was an effort to make Stalin appear avuncular. Dobrynin was truly extraordinary. His tenure in Washington stretched from Stalin to Gorbachev and many Americans were led to believe that a personal relationship with Dobrynin could yield substantive results. Many Sovietologists scoffed at the notion. It is true, I think, that near the end of the Soviet era personal relations with Gorbachev, Shevardnadze and Yeltsin did pay results but this was not the case until then.

Q: And with the White House?

NEWLIN: Very good. Very good. We worked with Lloyd Cutler, who was drafting the agreement on the hostages and we gave him input on things that could be included.

Q: What was the effect of Jeane Kirkpatrick taking over at the UN?

NEWLIN: Well, I would say Jeane was an accurate reflection of the takeover of the Department and other agencies. A deliberate distancing from the positions taken by the previous administration. All of this was reflected in their meetings with Heads of State from Underdeveloped Countries. It was a new day, but it was an accurate reflection of the tone that was being set by Reagan and others.

Q: Did you campaign for Kurt Waldheim's third term as SecretarGeneral or Perez de Cuellar?

NEWLIN: I think we felt that his time was up. I'm not sure, but I wasn't involved. Perez de Cuellar was certainly a great improvement over Kurt Waldheim.

Q: He was. That's interesting.

Your tour in IO came to an end for a very good and happy reason when you were appointed by President Reagan as Ambassador to Algiers in 1981. Did this come as a bolt out of the blue or had it been in the works for some time?

NEWLIN: No, it was among various things. The Foreign Service Personnel System nominated me, actually asked would I be interested, and I said yes immediately. It was a fascinating assignment. My impression was that Personnel thought that I had been badly treated after only one year in IO, and that they wanted to do something that would demonstrate their confidence in me.

Q: How did your confirmation hearings go?

NEWLIN: Breezed along. A veritable, blue-ribbon group, including Dick Murphy and others. Interestingly enough, Joseph Verner Reed was the only political appointee in the group. Q: He went to Morocco?

NEWLIN: He went to Morocco. He breezed by the group.

Q: What were the state of our relations with Algiers?

NEWLIN: They were in a sort of limbo. For years and years we'd had broken relations because of the '67 war. We had an Interest Section there and, in effect, an Ambassador, but he wasn't accredited. It was a minimal kind of thing. The Algerians had come to the conclusion that they wanted to improve their relations with us and that showed in their deep involvement in solving the hostage crisis. So I arrived at a very opportune moment. Indeed, during the three years that I was there, our relations steadily improved. I don't take any great personal credit for it, but they improved dramatically. I gained direct access to the President and his closest advisors. One of my coups was in persuading Vice President Bush to come to Algiers while I was there; a highly successful visit. He established a rapport with President Benjedid, which turned out to be useful in the highjacking of the TWA plane just before I left. The Algerians again played a very useful role in helping us get a large number of passengers released in Algeria. But during that period, our relations did improve. We had greater access. They had a very capable Ambassador, Mohammed

Sahnoon in Washington, and we were just there at a very, very interesting and opportune time.

Q: How large was our Embassy?

NEWLIN: It wasn't very large. I would say rather modest. Life iAlgiers was difficult. We didn't have a very large embassy.

Q: Difficult in what way? High cost of living? Security problems?

NEWLIN: Yes. The security problems were really not serious then—we knew the fundamentalists were increasing their influence and everything, but there were no terrorist attacks, no assassinations at that time. Algeria had made a mess of their economy by going the socialist route after independence. Their agriculture had fallen into ruin. They had to import most of their food. There was very, very little to buy. The Department insisted, of course, that we change our money at the official rate. Nobody else did practically. What little there was to buy was very expensive. Even the FS inspectors got sticker shock in Algeria.

Q: Did you have any constituent post in Algiers?

NEWLIN: Yes, Oran. It was an interesting post near the Moroccan border and when I arrived there was a sizeable American presence at the liquid natural gas plant there.

Q: And you were able to travel around?

NEWLIN: Yes. We traveled everywhere even to Tamanrasset in thmiddle of the Sahara.

Q: How were Americans received there?

NEWLIN: Very warmly received. A warm welcome.

Q: Can you say something about the lingering French presence?

NEWLIN: There again, it's like the Belgians and the Zaireans. The French and the Algerians were condemned to cooperate. There were always continuous frictions and problems. But the French still had a sizeable presence there. Of course, there were many Algerians living in France.

Q: And influence.

NEWLIN: And influence.

Q: What about the Soviets?

NEWLIN: The Algerians were desirous of reducing their military and other dependence on the Soviets. I helped be responsible for establishing modest military cooperation with them. We sold them C-130 transport aircraft which they were eager to obtain.

Then we tried to increase our cooperation across the board which, I'm happy to say, we were able to do. But they definitely wanted to decrease their dependence on the Soviets for their military equipment.

Q: Did you have more than perfunctory relations with the Soviets oother communist missions there?

NEWLIN: The Russians had a sizeable presence in technical training and maintenance of equipment. The Algerians complained about the expense and the fact that MIG engines had to be sent to the Soviet Union for maintenance.

Q: What were your principal concerns as Ambassador there?

NEWLIN: To improve the political and economic relationship. I lobbied hard for grain sales and investment and tried to help American businessmen. Of course, the protection of

American citizens living there. Occasionally they would be arrested for things that they're not really responsible for. It culminated, just before we left, at the time of the highjacking of the TWA plane, that our contacts at the senior levels were very important. The Algerians, through their negotiations—we couldn't negotiate with the highjackers, but they could—they got the majority of the passengers released in Algiers before the plane departed for Beirut with the remaining hostages. They played a very helpful role there as they had in the Iranian hostage crisis. They also tried to be of help concerning our hostages in Beirut but that proved to be difficult since they were dealing with terrorist groups rather than a government as was the case in the Tehran hostages.

Q: Did you accompany President Benjedid on his official visit to thU.S.?

NEWLIN: Yes. From both sides, it was a successful visit. Benjedid and Reagan established a rapport which reinforced the good relations between Bush and Benjedid.

Q: You traveled around the country?

NEWLIN: Yes. We went to Los Angeles and San Francisco. Benjediwas very interested in U.S. agriculture.

Q: What was the Algerian interest in the Middle East?

NEWLIN: They were eager to play a role, if they could, but they werso far removed they weren't really active players.

Q: Did you get out and make speeches?

NEWLIN: No. Algiers is not the place where you're asked to make speeches. I was on television after I presented my credentials. Occasionally, I would have a chance to do some public relations, but it was minimal.

Q: When you left in 1985, could you foresee the current troublAlgeria is having?

NEWLIN: In retrospect, it was like a cloud no bigger than a man's hand. We would drive up to Chrea in the Atlas Mountains on the weekend, which for us was Thursday and Friday. We first started going up through the town of Blida where horrible things happened later. In town there was a mosque, and the first year or year and a half if we went up there on Friday (we drove by on Friday around noontime), the mosque would be full, but in the later years before we left, the mosque was overflowing and the crowd was out on the road. In retrospect, that was an indication of the growing influence of the fundamentalists. There was fertile ground for discontent. The majority of the population was young and Algeria had failed to create sufficient jobs.

Q: Yes. Any other comments on your tour of duty in Algiers?

NEWLIN: I believe President Benjedid wanted to move away from a one party state and socialism toward pluralism and a market economy. The diehard socialist elite resisted change so when reforms came they were overtaken by fundamentalism

Q: After four years, that came to an end and you returned to the Department, where you became the Principal Deputy in the Bureau of Consular Affairs. I believe the Assistant Secretary was Joan Clark?

NEWLIN: Joan Clark—a most distinguished Foreign Service Officer.

Q: How did this assignment come about? Did you ask for it?

NEWLIN: I was fishing around for various things. One thought was that I might put my hat in the ring to go to New York as the Deputy Permanent Representative with Vernon Walters. I'd met Vernon Walters during his trips to North Africa. But Walters decided on another officer, then Joan called me up and I was very happy to have the opportunity of working with her.

Q: How did you and she divide the work?

NEWLIN: Joan began—it was a little bit like in Zaire—Joan sort of wanted me to coordinate various things. She had a Special Assistant, Phyllis Bucso, who had worked with her for years, so between Phyllis and myself we did a lot of the day-to-day administration of the Bureau; whereas Joan set policy and exercised oversight. We all worked very closely.

Q: You're supervising a very large office.

NEWLIN: Very large. Passports, visas, protection of American citizens abroad. One of the largest Bureaus and we generated income as well but it all went to Treasury rather than to the Department and Consular Affairs.

Q: What were the principal problems that you had to deal with?

NEWLIN: Well, we testified before Congress on the reform of immigration. We worked with INS in trying to bring about a better situation than we had. We also worked to bring CA [Consular Affairs] up-to-date with machine-readable passports, machine-readable visas, and electronic visa applicant clearances which speeded up things greatly. That was a big and costly operation.

Q: Were you under heavy Congressional pressure?

NEWLIN: No, our relations with Congress were very, very good. We had occasional broadsides from Barney Frank, but with the leadership we had common objectives and Joan was widely respected.

Q: Were there other crises?

NEWLIN: Well, I became the head of an interagency group that would go to Wiesbaden each time a Beirut hostage was released to debrief. The hostage would undergo medical tests at the Air Force hospital while the briefings took place. Then family members joined

us and finally the hostage met the media. Jacobson was the most interesting hostage. Well, when we went to the small Wiesbaden airport to meet Jacobson, I went out to the Swiss Lear jet to meet him. Inside was Jacobson, Terry Waite and Ollie North, who promptly said, “I'm not here.” It was while we were in Wiesbaden that a Beirut paper reported McFarlane had gone to Tehran with a chocolate cake and Bible. I felt uneasy. Back in Washington, both Reagan and Mrs. Reagan were very nervous before Jacobson met the press outside the Oval Office.

Q: Did you testify before the Congress, or did Joan?

NEWLIN: I testified on occasions when Joan was not available. testified on some of the immigration legislation, mainly.

Q: Who supervises Consular Affairs on the 7th Floor of thDepartment?

NEWLIN: I would say there wasn't very much supervision. It ran on its own because Joan had a great reputation. Besides, it was so arcane: laws, regulations, different quotas. As long as we were doing our thing and there were no problems we were let alone.

Q: Just don't let any trouble arise.

NEWLIN: That's right.

Q: I often wondered about that myself. Who gave .... and oversight. What about the Bureaus of the Department. Did you have any friction with them?

NEWLIN: No, no.

Q: Did the Bureau play any role in the election of 1988?

NEWLIN: Well, you know, there was the famous search of Clinton's file and that of his mother, but that was after my time and after Joan was gone.

There was the famous political appointee from New Hampshire and friend of Sununu who was Assistant Secretary and that was disastrous. Nothing like that would ever, ever happen on Joan's watch.

Q: Well, after three years as a Deputy in Consular Affairs, you moved to Vienna in a very interesting job as United States Representative to the UN Organizations there. What were the UN Organizations in Vienna—the IAEA?

NEWLIN: The IAEA—International Atomic Energy Agency—was the principal one. We had UNRWA, the Palestine refugee relief organization. There was something called UNIDO, United Nations Industrial Development Organization. Then there were all the drug agencies, and social issues including the status of women. There were quite a few. The main one obviously being the IAEA, and secondly UNRWA.

Q: How large was your staff?

NEWLIN: We were rather thin, I would say. Very modest. Myself, a DCM, one Political Officer, two or three officers dealing with several sectors. And then several officers dealing with IAEA on a technical level.

Q: Where did your instructions come from—IO?

NEWLIN: Instructions came through IO. Of course, there were other agencies which participated, Energy was a major player. It was funneled through IO.

Q: What were your relations with the Embassy in Vienna?

NEWLIN: Very, very good. There were several Ambassadors there. The Ambassador to Austria. We had very good relations with Henry Grunwald and later with Huffington. Then there was the CSCE, there were also the CFE talks—Jim Woolsey. There were four Ambassadors resident there.

Q: Rich table of Ambassadors there!

NEWLIN: Yes!

Q: What were the problems you had in that job?

NEWLIN: The problems were to maintain an effective—to make sure the IAEA did its job in preventing nuclear proliferation, and then when we had the Iraq crisis, we got involved in that. The role of the IAEA changed vis-a-vis Iraq because it was charged with destroying Iraq's nuclear weapons capability. UNSCOM [United Nations Special Commission] in New York also had a role but the expertise resided with the IAEA which had monitored sites in Iraq for years.

Q: You were there in the Gulf War.

NEWLIN: Yes. I was involved in the diplomacy that preceded the war and in the aftermath. After the war, I tried to play a role in keeping relations on an even keel between the IAEA and the UN Special Commission in New York. There was a role to play on sanctions in New York. But clearly, IAEA was the main source of skilled international nuclear personnel.

Q: Did IAEA have any enforcement powers?

NEWLIN: Prior to the Gulf War they did not. Their original function was to conduct inspections of peaceful nuclear programs to make certain nuclear materials had not been diverted. Afterwards, they were responsible for destroying Iraq's secret nuclear weapons infrastructure and for removing nuclear material in the country.

Q: What were the other major IAEA issues at that time?

NEWLIN: Mainly they were to maintain the level of our contribution. Washington tended to cut back across the board concerning international organizations. We were able

to maintain our contribution to maintain the IAEA's effectiveness. Hans Blix was a tremendous Secretary General. We worked closely with him and other senior IAEA personnel.

Q: We were trying to prevent India and Pakistan from developinnuclear bombs, weren't we?

NEWLIN: That's right, we and others. The matter could not be discussed formally in the IAEA but Blix would host small dinners where Ambassadors of the nuclear powers could meet and discuss the issue with their Indian and Pakistani counterparts. The latter took the line that the nuclear powers were hypocrites—they developed nuclear weapons but urged others not to. Blix agreed but stressed they were still right to urge India and Pakistan to forego nuclear weapons programs.

Q: What was the IAEA attitude toward changes in the peace clause?

NEWLIN: They did their best, with modest resources, to try to prevent nuclear proliferation. Of course, when the Soviet Union collapsed, that left a big hole in their budget. Russia couldn't afford to pay and the new Successor States couldn't afford to pay, and that left quite a few problems.

Q: Now, what about our concern with Iraq and the Iraqi program?

NEWLIN: Well, we helped them greatly with the inspection sites. We helped them with coverage of the nuclear program. Then the IAEA did destroy all of their nuclear facilities. They were vacant by that time, but we felt they ought to be destroyed.

Q: They were destroyed?

NEWLIN: They were destroyed.

Q: What was the atmosphere at the IAEA during the Gulf War?

NEWLIN: I think people felt that Saddam Hussein had brought it on himself. Of course, the fact that we had the British, the French and the Russians with us—that helped.

Q: Was there Congressional or other high level interest in what yowere doing at the IAEA?

NEWLIN: I think they were aware of it and they approved of the role of the IAEA and UNSCOM in the destruction of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction.

Q: You were inundated, yes.

Well, your tour there in Vienna ended in 1989, and you returned to Washington and were engaged in Political/Military Affairs for a time. What did this consist of?

NEWLIN: Well, initially, I was doing super computers—heading the Super Computer Working Group, which I knew nothing about. I did that for a while, then they asked me, “Mike, what would you really like to do?” I said, “Well, if ever Bob Gallucci gets tired of his job in New York as the Deputy Executive Chairman of the UN Special Commission on Iraq Sanctions, I have a UN background, and I might be interested in doing that.” I also said I'd be interested in doing anything in regard to the former Soviet Union in the field of nuclear non-proliferation. So, out of the blue, Ken Clark called me one day and said, “Bob Gallucci says he's just got to come back to Washington. This commuting is killing him, so would you go up and replace him?” I said, “I'll go up and replace him for a few weeks.” That lasted nine months. It was one of the most interesting things I've ever done. I was Deputy Executive Chairman of the UN Special Commission on Iraq Sanctions, with the rank of Assistant Secretary General. I worked very closely with Rolf Ekaus, who was the Chairman, implementing the sanctions. Then I got back into my old job of trying to keep peace between the IAEA and the UN. This time from New York. More or less, I think we succeeded. I was there for nine months and we did, as I say, destroy the nuclear capability along with Scud missiles and huge amounts of nerve and mustard gas. While Ekaus was away, I had the task of overseeing an unannounced inspection of one of Saddam's

palaces which intelligence reports assured us was cover for an underground nuclear reactor. I was on the radio in New York as the team was blocked at the entrance. I made it clear that refusal to permit the inspection would result in a prompt report to the Security Council. After the Iraqi's consulted Baghdad, we were allowed in. Of course, the palace was just a palace.

Q: Did you get to travel to Iraq?

NEWLIN: I never got to Iraq. Too bad. I would like to have, but ijust didn't work out.

Q: Is that committee still in existence?

NEWLIN: Very much so. In recent times Iraq's refusal to permit inspections has brought the U.S., Britain and others to the verge of air strikes with Saddam relenting at the last moment.

Then when I came back in September 1992 they said that the Deputy Assistant Secretary who was in charge of export controls was leaving to go to the White House, and would I take that over? I said I'd do it on a temporary basis. So for the rest of my time there, I was Deputy Assistant Secretary for Export Controls and Policy. Bob Einhorn came in one day and said, “Would you mind leading a delegation to the former Soviet Union on export controls for the Nunn-Lugar program?” Nuclear Non-Proliferation. So I led a delegation to Kazakhstan, Russia, Belarus, and Ukraine. And I made many, many trips during the rest of my tour there on that. It was a nice, sort of a coda to my Foreign Service career.

Q: Do you feel you were effective in what you were trying to dthere?

NEWLIN: I think we were. I negotiated the Export Control Agreement with Ukraine. I also negotiated one with the Russians which they were reluctant to sign. Eventually they agreed to abide by its provisions even though it was not signed. We negotiated agreements with Belarus and Kazakhstan as well. And all of these states now have

national legislation and bureaucracies which are meant to prevent the export of weapons of mass destruction or their components or technology related to them.

Q: Were you welcomed by the host countries when you went, or werthey resentful?

NEWLIN: They agreed. We had to show them the benefits they would achieve by cooperating with the Nunn-Lugar program which were substantial. All of them agreed with the goal of non-proliferation and Ukraine, Kazakhstan and Belarus agreed to transfer Soviet missiles and warheads on their territory to Russia for destruction. A major achievement.

Q: This dealt mainly with nuclear material?

NEWLIN: Anything to deal with weapons of mass destruction. Certainly nuclear material and delivery systems were the main objective but the Nunn-Lugar program covered chemical and biological weapons as well.

Q: Well, that brings us to the conclusion. When did you retire—i'95?

NEWLIN: I really retired officially when I reached the age of 65, when I was in Vienna, in '91, but I could stay on a few more months until September, when my successor arrived. Then, when I came back, Larry Eagleburger suggested that I do some work with PM. I think the Administration at that time saw it as something that would last about six months, but it lasted two years.

Q: Well, Mike, you've had a long and rewarding career in the ForeigService. Do you have any last minute thoughts about it?

NEWLIN: I think the past half century has been the golden age of American diplomacy and influence. I was fortunate in the posts I had, the colleagues I worked for and with and the opportunity to work on, in a modest capacity, some of the momentous issues that arose.

On balance, the record is a positive one: war torn Europe rebuilt; former enemies became friends and allies; colonialism disappeared; an uneasy nuclear truce was maintained and, against all expectation, the Soviet Union self-destructed. European unity, an idea advocated by the United States in the nineteen-fifties, began to assume shape.

The Cold War, of course, dominated virtually all aspects of international diplomacy. The costs and the risks associated with the strategic arms race were staggering and the amount of fissile material in impoverished and demoralized Russia is an enormous threat. It is in our interest to help the Russians develop and maintain effective safeguards for nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction.

The greatest tragedy of the half century was the Vietnam War in which Lyndon Johnson acted on the advice of the political-military “wise men” of his time in order to prevent what they described as the “domino effect.”

Of the Presidents I served, Truman was magnificent. A former Senator from Missouri with no international experience suddenly thrust into the Potsdam Conference to deal with Stalin and Churchill. Eisenhower and Bradley had the sense at the time of Dien Bien Phu to refuse to enter a colonial war in Vietnam. Kennedy was an inspiring President (the dark side of Camelot was not well known) whose finest moment was the humiliating defeat of the Soviets during the Cuban Missile Crisis. A victory which, however, sparked an ever upward spiraling strategic arms race. Johnson enacted Kennedy's social legislation agenda and then made the mistake of getting involved in a war in the jungles of southeast Asia. Nixon and Kissinger were remarkable, not only for the opening to China, but in their overtures to the Soviets. I certainly never expected to see Nixon broadcasting live on TV from the Kremlin! Carter was a decent, honest man who was unable to inspire. He did leave an impressive international legacy in the Camp David accords and the Panama Canal treaty. Ronald Reagan, despite his detractors will be remembered as a great President. He caused a shift in the domestic political spectrum and hastened the collapse of Communism. The Reykjavik summit in 1986 was a turning point in the Cold

War. Bush's reputation will be rehabilitated by history: he handled the dangerous collapse of Communism and the transition from Gorbachev to Yeltsin; took courageous steps to reduce nuclear weapons and put together a coalition to reverse Saddam Hussein's occupation of Kuwait.

The future: always risky to predict but necessary to plan for. What a different international scene now from the one analyzed so brilliantly by Professor Paul Kennedy in his 1983 The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers. Contrary to the predictions of many (not necessarily Kennedy), Japan has not replaced the United States as the world's leading state. We will remain the sole superpower for the foreseeable future. Perhaps China will continue its rapid rise and one day will overtake Japan. Russia, with its vast natural resources, has the potential to become a superpower again if it can overcome its present predicament which was caused by decades of Communist repression and misrule.

Yes, I did have a long career. There was never a dull moment. loved it.

Q: Well, thank you very much, Ambassador Newlin. This is ThomaDunnigan signing off on October 10, 1997.

End of interview